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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PRETORIA 000154

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SUBJECT: FNL PEACE PROCESS BOGGED DOWN, VAN ECK SAYS

REF: A. TRENKLE-CARROLL EMAIL OF 12/21/2006

[1](#)B. BUJUMBURA 15

Classified By: Acting Deputy Chief of Mission Perry Ball. Reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY. The FNL peace process remains bogged down in administrative arguments, according to ISS analyst Jan van Eck. The FNL still refuses to participate in the JVMM because the GOB has not released from prison some of the FNL representatives for the JVMM and because the South African Mediation did not make funds available for travel. Van Eck blames South Africa for not managing the process better. Looming issues in the peace process, in van Eck's view, include the increasingly unhappiness of FNL combatants who are not receiving support and the likely GOB rejection of the "Palipehutu-FNL" name for the political party as ethnically-based. South Africa plans to expand its deployment in Burundi under AU auspices to 1,100 troops to implement the FNL peace process. It hopes other African countries will join the AU force by July. END SUMMARY.

Delays in Formation of JVMM

[1](#)2. (C) Institute for Security Studies (ISS) analyst Jan van Eck told PolOff January 11 that the Palipehutu-FNL is increasingly frustrated with the implementation of the September 7 Ceasefire Agreement. Van Eck said that following the December 16 agreement on immunity (Ref A), he had been optimistic that the peace process was back on track. In the agreement, brokered by the South African Mediation, ruling party CNDD-FDD leader Hussein Radjabu agreed to grant immunity to Palipehutu-FNL members, overcoming an earlier objection to the use of the ethnically-based word "Palipehutu" in the immunity decree.

[1](#)3. (C) With the immunity issued resolved, the FNL agreed to send representatives to take part in the Joint Verification Monitoring Mechanism (JVMM), as envisioned in the Ceasefire Agreement. The FNL should have arrived in Burundi January 10, but FNL leader Agathon Rwasa told van Eck that the FNL now refused to participate because: (1) some of their representatives on the JVMM had not been released from jail as the GOB promised; and (2) the South African Mediation did not make funds available for travel as promised.

South Africa to Blame?

14. (C) Van Eck placed the blame for the problems largely on the shoulders of the South African Mediation, which he complained is disorganized and uncoordinated. The FNL has largely lost faith in SAG Great Lakes Envoy Kingsley Mamabolo. They continue to trust the head of the Mediation, SAG Minister of Safety and Security Charles Ngakula, although Ngakula is extremely busy with his domestic portfolio and does not devote sufficient attention to the FNL mediation, in van Eck's view. Van Eck has personally urged Ngakula to travel to Dar es Salaam the weekend of January 13 to attempt to bring the FNL back on board.

Key Problems

15. (C) Van Eck identified two looming issues with the FNL peace process:

-- FNL fighters in the field have not been provided any food, medical supplies or other support since September. The FNL told South Africa they needed USD 12 million for total support, which included funds to set up the FNL as a political party. Van Eck admitted this amount was "laughable," but the South African Mediation instead provided only USD 15,000, which does not begin to cover basic expenses. Asked about recent FNL criminal violence in Burundi (Ref B), van Eck says the leadership has not directed any attacks, but that he would not be surprised if individual

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fighters had become desperate (or that others like John Bosco were attacking, then blaming the FNL).

-- When the FNL leadership returns to Burundi and attempts to register the party as "Palipehutu-FNL," van Eck said that the GOB will likely reject the party name as "ethnically-based" in violation of the Constitution. The FNL will not negotiate the name of the party. Van Eck has recommended to the South African Mediation that they deal with this issue now, before it explodes into a full-fledged battle.

South Africa Expanding Presence; Hoping for More AU Troops

16. (C) SAG Great Lakes Envoy Mamabolo and SANDF staff briefed European diplomats in Pretoria December 22 on their military deployment plans for Burundi. According to a Pretoria-based U.K. diplomat, South Africa plans to increase its commitment to the Burundi AU force to 1,100 personnel by the end of January 2007 (from the ONUB strength of 813), including a special task force to protect FNL leaders and combatants, a tactical planning element, a level-2 hospital, a battalion for escort duty, a "static" company, a support element, and two helicopters. South Africa hopes that other AU countries will contribute troops to replace the SANDF contingent by July 2007, but they acknowledge that this may not be realistic. (COMMENT: The urgent competition for African troops in Darfur, and now Somalia, make it even more unlikely that there will be troops from many other African countries to share South Africa's burden. END COMMENT.)

17. (C) According to the U.K. diplomat, SANDF officials are grappling with a number of unknown factors in their deployment plan, including which other countries might contribute forces, the strength of the FNL, where the assembly areas will be, and who will oversee the disarmament and demobilization now that ONUB is defunct.

18. (C) The six-month operational cost of the operation is USD

26.8 million. South Africa specifically asked the United Kingdom, Belgium, the Netherlands and France to provide funds for the operation, although Pretoria is prepared to fund the operation itself if no donor comes forward. Post understands that the European governments are evaluating the request for funding -- and have requested more detail -- and the Pretoria-based embassies are generally recommending funding.

Comment

19. (C) South Africa has devoted enormous energy to the Burundi peace process, and it remains committed to seeing it through to the end. However, SAG resources for the process -- both diplomatic and military -- remain seriously overstretched, as evidenced by van Eck's complaints about coordination and communication. We share van Eck's hope that Minister Ngakula will be able to devote more time to getting the process back on track.
BOST